

OLANDER SAYS IT TOOK HOUR TO CLOSE STEAMER GANGWAYS

How it took the crew of the S. S. Christopher Columbus an hour to close the eight main deck gangways in August, 1914, was part of the story which Victor Olander of the seamen's union told the coroner's jury late last night.

"It would have taken only a few minutes for the boat to sink if the engines should have stopped in the trough of a heavy enough sea," Olander declared. "The vessel would have soon filled through the eight six-foot openings in her hull."

Olander says that he wrote to Secretary of Commerce Redfield, claiming that the inspection service was rotten. As an instance of its laxity, he told Redfield about the gangways which could not be closed quickly because bolts were rusted and holes plugged with paint.

Olander says that he thought nothing came of his complaint until some time later when a friendly inspector told him that Charles H. Wescott had been sent here to investigate.

"The inspector told me the crew had been called upon by the inspectors to close the gangways as soon as they could.

"The inspector told me it took them an hour to get the holes closed and when it was done only every third or fourth bolt had been put into place.

"Wescott left for his office, telling the local inspectors to write when the work was done, the inspector said," was the rest of the incident as told by Olander.

"If the seamen's law was in effect when the Eastland dropped her load in the river, she would have been allowed to carry only 1,060 passengers, because under the act which goes into effect in the fall a boat cannot take on more passengers than life saving apparatus is provided for. Big business is trying to repeal this."

Another letter written by Edward

Nockles of the Chicago Federation of Labor to Edward Sweet, assistant secretary of commerce, was quoted by Olander.

It reads in part: "Ocean excursion boats have been called 'tinder boxes,' but they are not a bit worse than some of the ones plying out of Chicago right now. Overcrowding excursion boats is going to result in a terrible catastrophe some day."

CARRY FIFTH OF PASSENGERS ALLOWED BY GOVERNMENT

In today's papers the Chicago, Duluth & Georgian Bay Transit Co. publishes an advertisement about its big steamers, the North American and South American, in which this statement is made:

"The management limits these ships to less than 600 passengers (their stateroom capacity), less than one-fifth the number the federal authorities would allow, as each boat has a recognized carrying capacity of over 3,000 passengers."

It might be interesting to find out why the management of this company carries less than one-fifth the number of passengers Uncle Sam would allow. It might indicate that the management thinks Uncle Sam is entirely too liberal for safety first.

SPEED, CRY ON EASTLAND

"Born a greyhound and died a wolf," was the short story of the Eastland, as told by S. C. Jenks, who designed the steamer and supervised its construction.

"Speed was the essence of the contract," he said. "Carrying capacity was the secondary consideration."

He said the tests upon which the owners insisted were for speed only and that after this failed to come up to the desired mark alterations were made to obtain greater speed.

Wm. Harper, lookout on Theodore Roosevelt, who saved 16 lives, nervous wreck in sanitarium.